



STATE DISTRICT COURTS  
DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Sherry Shipman, 16<sup>th</sup> District Court      Bruce McFarling, 362<sup>nd</sup> District Court      Jonathan Bailey, 431<sup>st</sup> District Court  
Steve Burgess, 158<sup>th</sup> District Court      Margaret Barnes, 367<sup>th</sup> District Court      Tiffany Haertling, 442<sup>nd</sup> District Court  
Brody Shanklin, 211<sup>th</sup> District Court      Doug Robison, 393<sup>rd</sup> District Court      Lee Ann Breathing, 462<sup>nd</sup> District Court

FOURTH AMENDED DENTON COUNTY DISTRICT COURTS TEMPORARY  
GUIDELINES REGARDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Following the guidance from the Texas Supreme Court, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, Office Of Court Administration, and in conjunction with Denton County Public Health, the Denton County District Courts recognize the concerns about COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus). As such, the health and safety of the public, and all employees, are of utmost concern and these temporary guidelines are hereby established to address these concerns in the following manner:

These guidelines are effective from May 1, 2020, through June 1, 2020.

**1. If a Person is Sick**

Everyone who is sick or who thinks they have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact (phone or email) the court to reschedule their hearings or trials. These individuals should not appear in court.

**2. Essential and Non-Essential Court Hearings**

Essential Court Matters will proceed by remote means, if possible, and only in-person if the hearing can be conducted in accordance with State and local mandates regarding social distancing / crowd sizes. Non-Essential Court Matters shall only be conducted via remote means, if the respective court approves such matter to be heard. **You must contact each court regarding any setting scheduled during the effective timeframe.**

**3. Essential Court Matters**

Civil and Family Law:

Essential court matters include, but are not limited to, CPS (DFPS) removal hearings, temporary restraining orders / temporary injunctions, family violence protective orders, and certain mental health proceedings.

## Criminal Law:

Essential court matters include, but are not limited to, writs of habeas corpus, certain bond hearings, and any time-sensitive hearing required to be conducted by an Appellate Court.

Plea dockets will be limited to pleas wherein the defendants are currently incarcerated in the Denton County S.O. jail. The plea hearings will be conducted remotely as specified by the presiding court. For specific details, please contact the Court Administrator in the court the case is assigned to or the Denton County Criminal Defense Bar.

Announcement Dockets are non-essential and shall be reset. Defendants who are free on bail and represented by counsel shall not appear for any announcement setting in person. All reset notices will be emailed to the attorneys and bonding company. The Defendants will be mailed a copy of the reset notice. No pass slips will be required during the duration of these guidelines. All self-represented individuals must contact your bonding company and the Court Administrator, in the court your case is filed, to obtain a reset date. DO NOT appear in-person at court.

### **4. No Jury Trials**

The district courts will not be calling any jury trials during the time this order is in effect. It is anticipated that Jury Trials will resume July 13, 2020.

### **5. Uncontested Matters and Prove-Up's by Submission only.**

All uncontested Proposed Orders shall be submitted electronically. **This includes any proposed orders normally entered during morning prove-up dockets for each court between 8:00 – 9:00 a.m.** (Please note, prove-up Affidavits may be required). Please contact the specific Court Administrator if questions arise.

### **6. Electronic Appearances**

Courts are conducting electronic appearances for Essential and Non-Essential hearings, as applicable. At the present time the courts are utilizing Zoom. Contact the Court Administrators and refer to the Remote Hearing Guidelines (posted on the courts' websites) for additional details.

### **7. Contact the Courts**

Please refer to the Courts' websites for more information. If you have any questions, please email the Court Administrators directly.

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE THE ABOVE TEMPORARY GUIDELINES MAY BE REVISED AT ANYTIME.**

Denton County District Courts

Denton County District Clerk

SIGNED on May 1, 2020.

/s/ Brody Shanklin

The Honorable Brody Shanklin

Local Administrative Judge

On Behalf of:

16<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Sherry Shipman  
158<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Steven Burgess  
362<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Bruce McFarling  
367<sup>th</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Margaret Barnes  
393<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Douglas Robison  
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442<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Tiffany Haertling  
462<sup>nd</sup> Judicial District, Hon. Lee Ann Breading